



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 8 to 10

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Courage**

Courage is the willingness to take action despite fear of failure or negative outcomes. This essential quality gives us strength to face the challenges both great and small that confront us in our daily lives.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Lay the foundation for your child to expect moral courage in others and himself.

Middle-years kids may start to display a different kind of courage--moral courage, the drive to do the right thing despite fear of negative consequences. Two developmental milestones occurring at this age make moral courage possible--the awareness of others' perspectives and a sense of right and wrong. Setting a good example of moral courage for your children throughout their growing-up years will ignite their capacity to stand up for what's right.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **The Red Badge of Courage:** As a family, encourage safe risk-taking. Every time someone in the family does something hard, make a badge for the fears they faced (e.g., Mom learned how to use the computer; Dad was scared to death to speak in public; child said no to a group of kids who wanted to do something wrong).
- ✓ **Praise your children** if they return a toy they've found to its rightful owner when they'd really like to keep it--or when they pick a disabled child to play while choosing teams in sports.
- ✓ **Try "Fearless Falling."** Have the strongest adult in the family act as "catcher" for the "fearless fallers" in this game of courage. The catcher stands a few inches behind the faller, who holds his or her arms out in a "T." When the catcher gives the word, the child simply falls backward and is caught under their arms. Play several rounds, with the catcher moving a little farther away from the faller in each round. By the end, children will be amazed at how far they have the courage to "fall." Afterward, talk about what it would have felt like to fall that far on the first try. Most kids will say it would have been too scary. This teaches that if they keep trying, kids can work up the courage to do things that seem impossible at first glance.

Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @

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